

Special Meeting of the
Board of TFD Fire Commissioners

DRAFT -- Meeting Minutes – March 31, 2020
Thompsonville Fire Station, 35 N. Main Street, Enfield, CT

1. Call to Order: by Comm. DuFour at 6:00 pm.

2. Roll Call: present (via conference call) were Comm. DuFour, Comm. Perry, Comm. Pliszka, Comm. Dodd, and Comm. Bouthiette . Also present (via conference call) was Chief Deskis and Department Secretary Steneri.

3. Discussion of 2020 – 2021 Fiscal Year Budget:

Comm. DuFour said the Board has to approve the 20-21 budget tonight in order to have the public hearing tomorrow. We are going to have the public hearing by conference call. The public will be able to call in and give their comments. Dept. Secy. Steneri said the public hearing isn't tomorrow. That is on April 15th. Tomorrow is the budget presentation meeting and there is no public comment. Comm. DuFour said he meant the budget presentation is tomorrow. Either way, it needs to be open to the public.

Comm. DuFour asked for discussion on the budget. Comm. Dodd said the Board has gone through it several times already. I have discussed it with our accountant. I have discussed it with the Chief multiple times. I think the budget is good. Comm. Pliszka asked since \$20,000 was removed from salaries, was the payroll taxes adjusted. Comm. Dodd said I don't know if it would lower the amount that much to make a change. I would keep it the same because that is an estimate. That could change depending on overtime. Comm. Pliszka said thank you. Comm. Bouthiette said the budget looks good.

MOTION to accept the proposed 2020 – 2021 fiscal year budget as presented made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Perry. Discussion: none. Roll Call-
Motion passed 5-0.

4. Discussion of COVID-19 Budget Procedure:

Comm. DuFour said he wanted to discuss the changes that need to be made to the process of budget approval and elections because of the corona virus. The Chief and I had a conference call with Atty. Landolina this morning. The meetings still need to be open to the public. All the agendas will need to have the call-in phone number and access code. The recordings will need to be posted to our website within 7 days.

Either the audio or the video recording can be posted. We are in a holding pattern as far as the election of Fire Commissioners. I would like to postpone the election until June and then the Board can re-evaluate it. The closing date for application submission is coming up soon. Comm. Dodd asked is that going to be separate vote from the budget. Comm. DuFour said the Board can approve the budget ourselves. Comm. Perry asked can the Board approve the budget and set the mill rate. Comm. DuFour said yes. Comm. Dodd asked so we are not going to have a vote on the budget. Comm. DuFour said no. The executive order that the Governor approved allows the budgeting authority to set the mill rate and approve the budget. Comm. Dodd asked what are we doing with the public tomorrow. Comm. DuFour said it is the presentation of the budget. Comm. Dodd asked so we are doing this again tomorrow night as a presentation of the budget. Comm. DuFour said yes, tomorrow night at 6:00 pm. Comm. Dodd said I need to present the budget. Comm. DuFour said that is correct.

Comm. Perry asked Comm. DuFour if he would stay on the Board until the Commissioner election. Comm. DuFour said he isn't going anywhere. I will stay until a new person is elected. Comm. Bouthiette would have to agree to the same thing. Let's pick a date in June and I will make a motion to extend the election. Comm. Perry said we have no idea where we will be in June with the virus. Comm. DuFour said the Board can set another date if things haven't changed by then. We can move it to July if that is the case. Comm. Bouthiette said we can say indefinitely due to the Governor's orders. We can't really pick a date until they are lifted. Comm. DuFour said he would like to put an update on the website. Atty. Landolina said we should tentatively pick a date and re-evaluate as it gets closer to that date. Dept. Secy. Steneri asked can we have the election on the same date as our regular meeting in June. Comm. Perry said we could do that. Comm. Bouthiette asked isn't there a 30 day notice for an election of Commissioner. Comm. DuFour said the actual election would be on June 17th. Comm. Dodd said we would have to post a notice in May. Comm. Bouthiette said there is a deadline for people to submit their names. Comm. Perry said what would be the last date people could apply. Comm. DuFour said 30 days prior to the election. Comm. Dodd said the regular meeting is on the 17th so it would be prior to that. Comm. DuFour said it's not going to be a regular meeting. It is just going to be an election of Commissioners. Comm. Perry said we could hold a meeting before the regular meeting. Comm. DuFour said yes but the only item on the agenda would be the election. Comm. Dodd asked can we have our regular meeting on the 17th and then have the election on the 24th. Comm. DuFour said we have plenty of time. Comm. Dodd said let's pick a date and we can work out the details later. The Board agreed to hold the election on June 17th. Dept. Secy. Steneri asked is there going to be all day voting or have people vote at the meeting. Comm. DuFour said all day voting. Eventually we are going to have to go back to the way things were before. Comm. Dodd said this does not affect the budget. When the Board approves the budget we are done. Comm. DuFour said the Board approves the budget and sets the mill rate and we are done. We need to follow the timeline for posting notifications but we don't have to publish it in the newspaper. Everything can be posted to our website.

Dept. Secy. Steneri asked do we still have to have an annual meeting on May 6th. Comm. DuFour said yes because that is when the Board approves the budget and set the mill rate. Comm. Perry asked can we have the annual meeting by conference call. Is everything covered under a national crisis? Comm. DuFour said yes, it is part of the Governor's executive orders. This is how we are going to conduct business from here on out. Comm. Perry said this will affect the people that don't have internet access. Comm. DuFour said people can call into the meeting. Dept. Secy. Steneri asked how are people going to get the number if they don't have access to the internet. Comm. DuFour said they can read it on the bulletin board outside. The phone number will be posted on the agenda. We can post the proposed budget on the bulletin board as well. We are doing the best we can.

Comm. Dodd said so for the budget presentation I am just going to say what the mill rate is, what the revenue will be, what the expenses are going to be, and carrying some money over from previous years. Comm. DuFour said yes. There is no public comment. Comm. Dodd asked how will people see the budget. Comm. DuFour said we will post it on the website and outside the station. Comm. Dodd asked what is the next step after the presentation. Comm. DuFour said the public hearing on April 15th. Comm. Dodd said that is when the public can ask questions. Comm. DuFour said yes. They will have to call into the meeting. Comm. Dodd asked what happens after the public hearing. Comm. DuFour said nothing until the annual meeting. I would like to put something on the website to let people know they can submit their budget questions to the Admin email address, mail them in, or call into the meeting. Comm. Perry said all of those questions have to part of the meeting minutes. Comm. DuFour said we will have to figure out a way to put the recordings on our website. Dept. Secy. Steneri said she wasn't sure if audio recordings can be posted on our website. People have posted videos but I am not sure if there is a size limit.

MOTION to extend the Commissioners election until June 17, 2020 made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Perry. Discussion: none. Roll Call- Motion passed 5-0.

5. Adjourn:

MOTION to adjourn made by Comm. DuFour, seconded by Comm. Dodd. All in favor by ayes at 6:25 pm.